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**THE CLAREMONT HOTEL, CLUB & SPA ANNOUNCES THE SECOND ANNUAL BERKELEY WINE FESTIVAL
FEATURING WINERIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD KICKING OFF ON MARCH 11, 2011**

Annual Festival Showcases a Series of Wine Dinners and Seminars at Meritage at the Claremont and Begins with a Grand Opening Reception Presenting Cuisine by Celebrated Berkeley Chefs

Berkeley, CA— February 16, 2011 — The Claremont will host the second annual Berkeley Wine Festival celebrating wines from California, Oregon, Italy and France beginning Friday, March 11, 2011. The festival will kick-off with a Grand Opening Reception featuring more than 50 wines and cuisine created by the Claremont's award-winning Executive **Chef Josh Thomsen**, and acclaimed Berkeley chefs including Wood Tavern's **Max DiMare**, Gather's **Sean Baker**, Summer Kitchen's **Paul Arenstam**, Venus & Revival Kitchen's **Amy Murray** and Café Rouge's **Rick DeBeaord**. Sponsored in part by Piper Heidsieck Champagne, S. Pellegrino and Acqua Panna, the two-month long festival continues with a series of receptions, dinners and seminars hosted by winemakers and proprietors of each participating winery.

"We are excited for the second year of the Berkeley Wine Festival and are proud to host the only Berkeley specific food and wine event," says Executive Chef Josh Thomsen at Meritage at the Claremont. "This year, we are bringing in even more world-class wineries as well as exciting culinary talent from our own backyard in Berkeley. We are honored to have these renowned winemakers at the Claremont for two months of great food and wine."

Bringing together winemakers and wine enthusiasts, the Berkeley Wine Festival celebrates great wine from around the globe and seasonal cuisine presented by StarChefs.com "Rising Star Chef" Josh Thomsen. Throughout the Berkeley Wine Festival, guests are invited to experience 10 intimate dinners hosted by a guest winemaker or proprietor. Prior to each dinner, guests will enjoy a reception or seminar before being seated for a festive evening of food and wine pairings. Dinners throughout the Festival will showcase the featured winery's special relationship with Meritage by giving guests the opportunity to enjoy world-class wines paired with Chef Thomsen's award winning food.

A list of scheduled events is as follows:

Friday, March 11, 2011

Grand Opening Reception

Come celebrate the opening night of the 2011 Berkeley Wine Festival at The Claremont Hotel Club & Spa. Sample more than 50 wines from the many wineries featured in this year's festival. Savor exquisite cuisine created by Executive Chef Josh Thomsen and a host of acclaimed Berkeley Chefs.

6:30 p.m., \$45 per person

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Miner Family Vineyards

Founded in 1998, Miner is a dynamic family owned winery located in the Oakville appellation in the heart of Napa Valley. Dave Miner began his career at Oakville Ranch Vineyards and has earned critical acclaim since the release of his first vintage at Miner. Join Dave Miner as he shares the vineyard's sensational portfolio of wines including its single-vineyard pinot noir, Oakville cabernet as well as their proprietary blend *Oracle*.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$140 per person

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

Tres Sabores Winery and Gainey Vineyard

We are proud to present Tres Sabores owner Julie Johnson and her husband, well known winemaker Jon Engelskirger, who oversees the red wine production at Gainey Vineyard. They will enlighten us with their approach to creating beautifully crafted boutique wines. Tres Sabores, located in Napa on the Rutherford bench, nestled in the base of the hills, produces elegant zinfandels along with other varietals. Gainey Vineyards, located in Santa Ynez, is the largest diversified farming operation in the valley. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and listen to two of California's passionate winemakers.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$130 per person

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Amapola Creek and Hanzell Vineyards

For the first time, two of Sonoma Valley's legends combine forces to present a remarkable array of world class wines. Hanzell, considered by many as Sonoma's Grand Cru of pinot noirs and chardonnays, will present with Amapola Creek's zinfandels, cabernets and syrahs. Hanzell President Jean Arnold Sessions and winemaker Emeritus Bob Sessions, will join Alis Arrowood, and Richard Arrowood, who for decades produced wines at his namesake winery and has opened Amapola.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$150 per person

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

Martinelli Winery

Martinelli is a family owned winery in Sonoma that has been growing grapes since 1887. Their estate grown grapes were so highly sought after, that in 1973, the family decided to produce their own wines. Consulting with legendary winemaker, Helen Turley, Martinelli Winery has positioned itself as one of the premier wineries in Sonoma. Regina Martinelli will delight us with her personal stories of the family's history.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$130 per person

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Flowers Vineyard & Winery

Founded in 1989 by Walt and Joan Flowers, this winery is located just two miles from the Sonoma Coast. These minimal intervention wines which are produced in this cool climate are terroir driven; made in small batches, basket pressed and are free-run fermented with wild yeast. Join Director of Winemaking Jason Jardine as he walks you through their full line of chardonnays and pinots.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$130 per person

Wednesday, April 20, 2011

Archery Summit

Archery Summit has been producing some of the highest rated and noted pinot noirs in Oregon for years. Anna Matzinger, who started as assistant winemaker in 1999 and assumed the role of head winemaker in 2001, will lead you through her outstanding, full expression wines as she engages in an informative discussion of her hands-on approach.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$130 per person

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

Poggio al Tesoro and San Polo Wineries

Tonight, Italian legends, Leonardo LoCascio and Marilisa Allegrini, feature wines from their two Tuscan properties, Poggio al Tesoro in Bolgheri and San Polo in Montalcino. Start the evening with a seminar featuring a vertical of the age worthy Sangiovese from Montalcino including their incredible Brunello. The dinner will include their beautifully crafted Super Tuscans from Poggio al Tesoro.

6:30 p.m., Seminar and Dinner, \$160 per person

7:30 p.m., Dinner only, \$130 per person

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Château Palmer

The relationship of exceptional winegrowers and fine terroirs is what makes great houses, such as Château Palmer, so distinctive. With detail and concentration, Château Palmer consistently creates wines of finesse and elegance that are among the pinnacle wines of Margaux. Join us in welcoming Bernard de Laage de Meux, marketing and communications director, as he shares his in-depth knowledge of winemaking, with an extensive line up including 2006, 2004, 2002, 2000 and 1998 vintages of this highly regarded Bordeaux for seminar and dinner.

6:30 p.m., Seminar and Dinner, \$225 per person

7:30 p.m., Dinner only, \$195 per person

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Opus One Winery

This elite winery from Napa Valley truly needs no introduction. Join winemaker Michael Silacci for dinner and a discussion about one of the most popular and desired wines in California. Enjoy these refined and world renowned wines with an elegant four course meal prepared by Chef Thomsen.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$195 per person

Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Trincherro Family Estate

Started in 1948, Trincherro is a well recognized name in the Napa Valley. Winemaker Mario Monticelli will present the Napa Valley small production estates portfolio. With a total production of only 12,000 cases, these wines represent some of the best in Napa. Enjoy their range of single vineyard designated wines from sauvignon blanc to cabernet as Mario discusses this exciting new project.

6:30 p.m., Reception and Dinner, \$140 per person

Reservations are required for each event and seating for the seminars and dinners is limited. Prices include tax and gratuity. Guests are also invited to stay overnight during festival events for 20% off the best available rate. Rooms are subject to availability and can be booked at www.claremont-hotel.com or 800-551-7266 using the promotional code WINE.

For more information on the Berkeley Wine Festival or to purchase tickets, please visit www.berkeleywinefestival.com or call 510-898-0040. For more information on the Claremont Hotel, Club & Spa, please call 800.551.7266 or visit www.claremont-hotel.com . For more information on Meritage restaurant, please visit www.meritageclaremont.com .

About the Claremont Hotel, Club & Spa

The Claremont, a member of the Pyramid Hotel Group, opened in 1915 and is located in California's Berkeley Hills. The property features 279 uniquely designed rooms and suites, a variety of unique meeting and event spaces, state-of-the-art fitness facilities, an incomparable 32 treatment room spa, and an award-winning food & beverage program. The new Meritage restaurant specializes in bringing the wine and food experience together with a menu of contemporary California cuisine while Paragon Bar & Café offers a menu of hand-shaken libations complementing a menu of casual American comfort food. In addition to the culinary experiences to be found at the Claremont, guests can relax at Spa Claremont, play a game of tennis or spend the afternoon poolside enjoying this landmark's spectacular views. For more information, please visit www.claremont-hotel.com or call (800) 551-7266.

About Meritage at the Claremont

Meritage at the Claremont opened December 2009 in the Claremont Hotel, Club & Spa located in California's Berkeley Hills. Under the direction of the Claremont's Executive Chef Josh Thomsen, this wine driven concept creatively pairs the flavor profiles of distinctive wines with small and large plates of contemporary California cuisine. StarChefs.com "Rising Star Chef" Thomsen sources from local farmers, purveyors and wineries to shape his menus, including a regular changing "Vineyard to Table" and "Sips & Bites" bar menu. An upscale yet comfortable lounge complements a spacious dining room, offering panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay. Meritage is also home of the Berkeley Wine Festival, which celebrates wines from California, Oregon, Italy and France and seasonal cuisine with two months of wine tastings and special wine dinners. Meritage is open for breakfast Monday through Saturday, 6:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. and Sunday, 6:30 a.m. until 9:30 a.m.; Sunday brunch, 10:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.; lunch Saturday, 11:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.; and dinner Tuesday through Saturday, 6:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. For more information, please visit www.meritageclaremont.com or call (510) 549-8510.

About Pyramid Hotel Group

The Pyramid Hotel Group, founded in 1999, is a Boston-based full-service hotel company that owns, manages and asset manages hotels and manages hotel construction/renovation projects. Pyramid Hotel Group currently has a portfolio of more than 60 hotels under management and asset management throughout the U.S. For more information about Pyramid Hotel Group, visit the company's website, www.pyramidhotelgroup.com

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